



Spring 2024

Dear Chorister,

The 2024-2025 school year approaches and it is time to think about the fall semester at Northwest Missouri State University. This letter provides information about our performing ensembles and essential details about the audition process for Tower Choir, Northwest's premiere auditioned ensemble, plus the music you will need to prepare for the audition. Please read it carefully.

Important reminder to all Vocal Performance Award (scholarship) recipients:

In brief, you are required to:

- enroll and participate in University Chorale during each semester of your scholarship (no audition required);
- enroll in 19-155 Applied Voice (or 19-355 only if you have passed upper-levels);
- complete the audition process for Tower Choir (required), performing to the best of your ability;
- enroll and participate in Tower Choir for both fall & spring semesters, (if selected through the audition process).

Please refer to your Vocal Performance Award for specific requirements.

Anyone desiring to become a member of Tower Choir **MUST** audition (i.e., you should not simply enroll).

Tower Choir auditions will be conducted virtually. The deadline for submission is May 31, 2024 by 11:59 pm. Please use the link provided to [submit your audition materials](#). Further information and specific details can be found on Page 4 of this document.

I look forward to hearing your audition! Go BEARCATS!

Sincerely,

Dr. Adam Zrust, Director of Choral Activities



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NORTHWEST TOWER CHOIR

Formed decades ago by Ralph E. Hartzell, the Northwest *Tower Choir* has a rich and varied history of outstanding choral performance and musical perfection. Since 1999, the ensemble has performed more than 150+ concerts for high schools, colleges, universities, churches, institutions, and organizations in the states of Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Ohio, Maryland, New Jersey, and Indiana. There have been fifteen peer-reviewed/invited concerts for learned societies/regional and state conventions, meetings, symposia (most recently for the 2024 State Convention of MMEA). In addition to this venue, the Tower Choir has performed at the Washington D.C. National Cathedral, Carnegie Hall, Drake University, UMKC, Rhodes College, University of Mississippi-Oxford, University of Nebraska-Omaha, University of Texas-Austin, William Jewell College, Conception Abbey (for the 2011 Regional Conference of MAMA), Colorado State University (for the 2011 National Conference of the National Collegiate Choral Organization/NCCO), Cathedral of Saint Cecilia, the Missouri Theatre (with the St. Joseph Symphony), and the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts (2023).

This year it will continue the highly successful joint concerts with extraordinary high school choirs/guest ensembles, the Northwest Choral Ensembles Series, among other activities. ALL members of the ensemble are REQUIRED to attend and participate fully in all of the concerts/events/festivals and any others that may be scheduled for the 2024-2025 academic year. Put the following dates on your calendar; OTHERS MAY BE ADDED:

| | |
|--|--|
| August 23, 24, 25 (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) | Retreat at First Presbyterian Church-Maryville |
| September 14 (Saturday) | National Anthem with Alumni Choir (tentative) |
| November 17 (Sunday) | Fall Concert (PAC/3pm) |
| November 20-22 (Tentative Tour) | Nebraska MEA Invited Conference Performance |
| December 6 & 7 (Friday/Saturday) | 49th Annual Yuletide Feaste |
| March 31-April 2 (TBD) | Jocelyn Hagen & Timothy Takach Residency |
| April 27 (Sunday) | Masterworks Concert |

Who is eligible to audition? Any Northwest student; you do not have to be a music major. The only restriction is that, if selected, you must be in the ensemble for both the fall and spring semesters, with the exception of those who are student teaching during the spring semester.

Senior Mentors: The Senior Mentors are a significant feature of the choral program at Northwest. *Possessing superior musical and vocal ability, they model professional behavior and rehearsal etiquette, and assist in the preparation, transition, and continuation of the ensembles from year to year.* In Tower Choir, they may be called upon to conduct in the absence of the director; to serve as section leaders/teachers for weekly sectionals and at the *Four-State Honor Music Festival*; and to help with administrative, audition, and workshop tasks.

Rehearsal Time: Tower Choir is scheduled to meet at 11:00-11:50 am on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Please note that the members will participate in all events as specified in the syllabus. Attendance is REQUIRED. The premiere a cappella ensemble performs a variety of choral literature that centers on the music of the masters. Since the repertoire is of such a challenging nature, three rehearsals per week are insufficient to understand how both personal and group ideas have to be molded to the needs of the music and ensemble as a whole. Therefore, members of the Tower Choir

must learn all of the notes on their own. Mandatory sectional rehearsals will be called each week by the section leaders to check/perfect the notes. Attendance is REQUIRED.

Attire: Members of Tower Choir will wear custom kurtis. Further information about measurements will be available if/when selected.

Note: All scholarship recipients are required to audition for Tower Choir. Past enrollment does not guarantee future ensemble enrollment.

NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY CHORALE

The University Chorale is a large choral organization open to all students at Northwest. There is no audition requirement for membership in the Chorale. The purpose of The University Chorale is to provide a performance venue for any student attending the university who has an interest in singing. Although some members of the group are music majors, the larger portion of the Chorale is composed of students across campus majoring in other fields. Since many students at Northwest have probably sung in a choir during high school, the Chorale is a welcome place for them to continue the wonderful experience of singing.

The repertoire presented in The University Chorale will provide a variety of styles, which will be challenging and fun to learn and perform. The group rehearses Tuesday and Thursday 11:00–11:50 a.m. each week.

ALL members of the ensemble are REQUIRED to attend these events. A partial list of activities follows below (put these dates on your calendar):

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| November 17 (Sunday) | Fall Concert, 7:00 pm |
| April 24 (Thursday) | Spring Concert, 7:00 pm |

Concert Attire: Concert black, head-to-toe.

NORTHWEST CONCERT CHOIR

Launched in the fall of 2024, Concert Choir is a new, intergenerational ensemble conducted by faculty members and students who have successfully passed MUS 19-420: Choral Conducting (grade "C" or better). This course will be open to middle school, high school, collegiate, and adult community members, and will meet 6:30-8:30 pm on Tuesday evenings.



| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| October 1 (Tuesday) | Fall Concert #1, 7:00 pm |
| November 12 (Tuesday) | Fall Concert #2, 7:00 pm |
| February 18 (Tuesday) | Spring Concert #1, 7:00 pm |
| April 15 (Tuesday) | Spring Concert #2, 7:00 pm |

Concert Attire: Concert black, head-to-toe.

NORTHWEST TOWER CHOIR AUDITION PROCEDURE

Dear Singer,

Thank you for auditioning for Northwest Tower Choir! This document outlines all pertinent information regarding how to complete your audition. Further information, including concert dates, performance attire, expectations, etc., can be found in the supplemental Audition Information Letter. In short, the video audition requirements are threefold:

1. A **solo repertoire excerpt** currently or previously studied (not to exceed two minutes). Something you've studied in applied lessons or prepared for a contest will suffice. You may choose whatever you like; however, I would recommend selecting something that showcases your instrument in a positive light (i.e., beautiful tone & musical > virtuosic & beyond your current development). Alternatively, you may sing "My Country 'tis of Thee" in a key of your choosing (acapella).
2. **Range demonstration:**
 - a. Five-note descending passage to your lowest note (i.e., C3  F2)
 - b. Five-note ascending passage to your highest note (i.e., D5  A5)
 - c. Count backwards from 20 to 1 (i.e., 20-19-18-17, etc.)
3. **Helvey's "The Eternal Gates"**. Practice tracks found [HERE](#).

Reminder: Don't forget to (1) include your name and preferred voice part in your video, and (2) use your preferred voice track when recording. A mock-audition sample video can be found [HERE](#).

Please complete your recording and upload to an unlisted YouTube link. One video is preferred; however, if you have previously recorded solo repertoire, you may submit two videos for consideration. When finished, please upload to [THIS FORM](#).

Thank you for auditioning!

Instructions for Recording

Performance reminders:

- Record from approximately two feet away in portrait mode.
- Record using your preferred voicing.
- Accurate rhythm, especially in all diction, is of paramount importance.
- Questions? Please ask! azrust@nwmissouri.edu

Materials:

- A **listening device** such as a phone, computer or tablet
- A bluetooth **speaker**.

- A separate **recording device** is needed if you are on a phone or tablet to listen, and is recommended even with a computer.
- **Sheet music** (printed or otherwise).

Before you record:

- Listen and sing at least three times without making errors before attempting to record. Practice the timing for breathing, paying special attention to cutoffs, fermatas, and places where the tempo fluctuates.
- Please practice before trying to record! It's easiest and best if you're very well prepared.
- Put your phone in airplane mode to minimize distractions and extra noises.

When you record:

- You will need to play and listen to your guide track on one device and record on another.
- You will also need to use your listening device (not the recording device) to look at your score if you can't print it out.
- **IMPORTANT:** The most important thing for you to do, aside from singing accurately, is to make sure you don't "clip" or overload the microphone. You can tell by listening back to your recording. If you are too loud for the microphone, you must sing more quietly. In general, your dynamics should be between *p* and *mf*.
- **VIDEO: Record in "selfie mode" and in portrait orientation** in the quietest spot you can find, and make sure the AC/heat are off, if you can, to reduce background noise. Make sure you are in the center of the frame, that your face is well lit, and that you take up almost all the frame. Your phone should be about two feet away from you.
- Remember to turn your notifications to silent so you are not disturbed during recording!

After you record:

- When you upload your track(s) to an unlisted YouTube, please title FullName1 and FullName2. For example, I would title mine AdamZrust1 and AdamZrust2.